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Good afternoon Senator Handley, Representative Sayers and Members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Maggie Bordeaux, DO and I am a third year Pediatric resident at CT Children's Medical Center and am working with the American Academy of Pediatrics, Ct Chapter. I am here today to offer input from CT Pediatrician's on legislation being discussed at this hearing.

On the surface, adolescents can be a moody, confrontational bunch. However, developmentally they go through complex inner turmoil, body changes that can be confusing, raging hormones and feeling the daily pressures of peers vs parents. They can be wonderfully receptive to discussing their current problems and concerns with health care providers given the appropriate environment of trust and support. Hence we support efforts to increase access to care for adolescents (S.B. 260) and increasing funding of school based health centers (H.B. 5074).

We applaud the recommendation to require an additional health assessment in either grade nine or grade twelve (S.B. 260: We would suggest the language read as follows under subsection c of 10-206: "Each local or regional board of education shall require each pupil enrolled in the public schools to have health assessments in either grade six or grade seven and in either grade nine or grade ten and grade 11 or grade 12."). Although, we as Pediatricians try to get all of our patient's in for yearly visits, this effort would ensure that those who may have otherwise been lost to follow up would come into the office. One of the easiest places for adolescents to seek care is at a school based health center. These centers have been integral and provide a comfortable, supportive environment where adolescents can receive information and treatment for their medical and social concerns.

Adolescence is also often a time of trial and error ie. experimentation. The offers from peers of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and sex come from all directions. In order to counter these pressures, we as Pediatricians try to arm our patients with information on not only the health effects of using such things as cigarettes, but also how to confront peers in these situations. Therefore we feel that enabling adolescents to make their own informed decisions guides them towards making future decisions for a healthy lifestyle. Hence we support H.B. 6915 An Act Appropriating Funds for Antismoking Education.

In the same vein we oppose H.B. 5078 An Act Prohibiting the Possession of Tobacco by Minors. We want to focus on education and decision making as opposed to criminalizing youth by imposing a fine.

Adolescents are my favorite patient population to work with because their lives can be so overwhelming to them. However, through respect and discussion teens can learn to make their own healthy decisions. If they are taught to respect themselves and to develop self confidence to make decisions then they are more likely to make healthy choices as adults.

Thank you for your attention.